

LECTURE TO SUPERVISORS BY OFFICE OF TRAINING

SUBJECT: RECOGNITION OF EMPLOYEE PROBLEMS

I. Off-the-Job Problems of Employees

A. Financial Problems

Experience has shown that many employee problems arising off-the-job relate to money matters. Some individuals become delinquent in paying debts incurred, thus coming to the attention of the Agency through complaints from creditors. Other types of financial delinquencies which are brought to the Agency's attention include notification of failure of the individual to pay Federal or State taxes. Experience has shown that one of the reasons for such financial difficulties is the employment of relatively young, immature individuals, away from home for the first time, who have never previously had training or experience in the handling of money. If such individuals can be reached early enough, they can sometimes be assisted in their development of a more responsible and mature method of handling financial affairs. Early recognition, however, is necessary before the indebtedness becomes chronic and necessitates disciplinary action which may lead to separation from Agency employment. It is also noted in this connection that it is often inadvisable to hire married individuals with children at low salary grades, since Washington is a notoriously expensive place to live and these people very often cannot make ends meet.

B. Conduct Problems Involving Young Employees

Conduct problems often arise among young employees (especially females) of the Agency, many of whom are away from home for the first time

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and are suddenly free from their usual parental and school restraints. This sometimes leads to undisciplined behavior which may involve excessive drinking, sexual promiscuity, etc. Occasionally the latter leads to pregnancy out of wedlock. Very often the Agency first becomes aware of problems of this nature by complaints from landlords or neighbors. Prompt attention is necessary in these cases and often necessitates disciplinary action leading to separation from Agency employment. In the case of young males, in addition to the drinking and sexual problems noted above, it has been noted that they are often involved in driving violations which occasionally result in arrests. These situations also require prompt attention.

C. Conduct Problems Involving Older Employees

In a somewhat different category than that cited in B above is the older employee, often middle-aged, who begins to show the wear and tear of Agency employment. These are often, but not exclusively, unmarried females who begin to show signs of emotional instability. Sometimes excessive drinking is involved, including confirmed alcoholism. These cases usually have psychiatric overtones and may usually be identified by a dropoff in the individual's efficiency at work, carelessness in dress, and an excessive number of absences, usually around the weekend (Fridays and/or Mondays). Cases of this sort usually require medical evaluation and often result in the necessity for separation in the event the therapeutic prognosis is not favorable.

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II. On-the-Job Problems of Employees

A. Performance

The supervisor should observe his employees and ask himself the following questions:

Is the person doing the job efficiently?

Is he undergraded or overgraded for his job?

Would he do better in another type of work?

Does he receive sufficient guidance so that he knows what is expected of him?

Does he receive some personalized attention such as encouragement and recognition?

If employee is doing poorly, has he been so advised and given the reasons?

If, after he has been warned, he is still not producing adequately, is action being taken to do something about it?

B. Conduct

Is the employee observing the rules, such as those involving time and attendance, leave, etc?

Is his attitude ok, or is there constant griping, bickering or feuding with other employees, complaints about work or duties assigned?

Is there any indication of outside distractions or interference which suggests problems off-the-job (See Section I above)?

Is there any indication subject is not carrying his fair share of the load, goofing off, etc?

C. Development

Is recognition being given for good performance?

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Are fitness reports prepared accurately and completely?

Is subject being considered for promotion at regular intervals or oftener if appropriate?

Is training--formal or otherwise--being offered to persons with potential to benefit from such training?

Is fitness report preparation used as an opportunity to discuss with the employee his strengths and shortcomings and his career development?

Is rotation being considered to provide for development of skills and career advancement?